

6 Feb 03

INFORMATION PAPER

SUBJECT: Showering after Activity and before Cold Exposure as a Risk Factor

1. **Purpose.** To provide information on whether trainees showering after activity and before exposure to cold weather increases susceptibility to illness.

2. **Facts.**

a. Information on personal hygiene, communicable illness, and protection from cold exposure is found in several general-subject Field Manuals; FM 4-02.33 (Control of Communicable Disease Manual); and TC 21-3 (Soldier's Handbook for Individual Operations and Survival in Cold-Weather Areas).

b. There is not an increased risk for respiratory illness from showering after exercise and prior to exposure to cold weather. In Army doctrine, "a daily shower with hot water and soap is ideal" (FM 3-05.70, Survival). The most frequently stated standard for bathing is, "bathe frequently; if showers or baths are not available, use a washcloth daily to wash your genital area, armpits, feet, and anywhere else the skin collects moisture, such as between the thighs or under the breasts." This statement is included in TC 21-3 (Soldier's Handbook for Individual Operations and Survival in Cold-Weather Areas) as well as FM 21-75, Combat Skills of the Soldier; FM 21-10, Field Hygiene and Sanitation; GTA 08-05-062, Guide to Staying Healthy; and TRADOC Pam 600-4, IET Soldier's Handbook.

c. The most important factors for success in resisting respiratory illness are:

(1) Washing the hands, especially after handling common-use items; after contact with persons experiencing illness; and before eating.

(2) Controlling coughing and sneezing, e. g., into a tissue or handkerchief.

(3) Maintaining required living space of 72 square feet per person. (This may be adjusted to 60 square feet during periods of surge, IAW revised TRADOC Reg 350-6, Enlisted IET Policies and Administration.)

(4) Dressing appropriately for the weather according to C-O-L-D principles, i. e., keeping clothes clean; avoiding overheating; layering clothing loosely; and keeping clothes dry. This guidance is found on the TRADOC Surgeon's website, <http://www.tradoc.army.mil/surgeon/index.htm>, and will appear in the revised TRADOC Reg 350-6.

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